



David Hockney: Bridlington Rooftops (October, November, December 2005)

When David Hockney created "Bridlington Rooftops" in October, November, and December of 2005, he was in the midst of one of the most profound homecomings of his career. This work represents a dramatic departure from the sun-drenched swimming pools and palm-lined boulevards of California that had defined his reputation for decades. Instead, we're looking at the modest, grey-roofed houses of a Yorkshire seaside town—viewed from what was then his mother's back garden.

But this isn't just a change of scenery. It's a complete reinvention. By the mid-2000s, Hockney had returned to Bridlington, about 75 miles from his birthplace in Bradford, drawn back by family and loss. His mother had passed away in 1999, and his close friend Jonathan Silver died in 1997 after a battle with cancer. The artist, now approaching 70 and increasingly deaf, found solace in this quiet coastal town where his sister Margaret lived, where anonymity was still possible, and where the light was different from anything Los Angeles could offer.

What makes "Bridlington Rooftops" particularly fascinating is that it was created digitally, using **Photoshop**. Hockney, ever the experimenter, was embracing the computer as yet another tool in his artistic arsenal. He approached the digital canvas the same way he'd approached oil paint or watercolor—building the composition with larger planes of color for the rooftops and chimneys, then adding detail.

The resulting image is simultaneously intimate and distant, familiar yet reimagined. The rooftops sprawl across the canvas in characteristic Hockney fashion, with that slightly

exaggerated perspective and those vibrant, unnatural colors that make everyday scenes feel somehow magical.

There's something deeply moving about an artist of Hockney's stature choosing to paint this: the unremarkable rooftops of terraced houses in a provincial English town. It speaks to what Bridlington represented for him—not glamour or fame, but home, memory, and the landscapes of his formative years. This was the countryside he'd known as an agricultural laborer in his youth, the place where his family gathered, the town where he could be just David again.

"Bridlington Rooftops" sits at a pivotal moment, bridging Hockney's earlier work and the monumental Yorkshire landscapes that would follow—those massive multi-canvas paintings of the Wolds that would culminate in his celebrated "A Bigger Picture" exhibition at the Royal Academy in 2012. You can see in these rooftops the seeds of what was coming: a renewed fascination with the English landscape, an embrace of new technologies, and a willingness to find wonder in the overlooked corners of his homeland. This is Hockney returning to his roots, armed with a computer and a renewed sense of purpose, proving that you can go home again—and find new ways to see it.

